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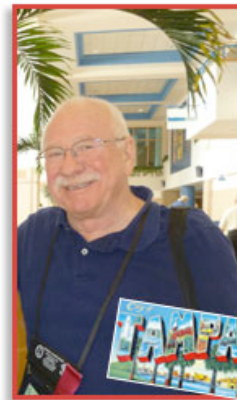
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## A Word From Tim Downs - July GS28 | A Family Reunion



Dear Friends,

Avery Post, former President of the United Church of Christ, once described the UCC as a "heady exasperating mix...." Every two years this "mix" gathers to do business, worship, offer a witness to the world, and have a family reunion. Our reunion took place in Tampa, Florida at the beginning of July, with seven delegates from the Southeast Conference and over 50 visitors.



In the bigger picture of the United Church of Christ, we bid thanks and farewell to three members of the Collegium of the denomination: Edith Guffey, who has served as the Associate General Minister; Steve Sterner, Executive Minister of Local Church Ministries; and Callie Rogers-Witte, Executive Minister of Wider Church Ministries. They will be succeeded respectively by Mark Clark, a lay leader from Southwest Conference, Ben Guess, who had led the publishing and communication ministry of the UCC, and James Moos, a local church pastor from North Dakota with a long interest in global ministry. The Synod also approved the proposal for a unified governance model described as a "missional model for us to do ministry in a post-modern world." The proposal will now be submitted to the 38 conferences for their approval. The highlight of the worship services for us from the Southeast Conference was the closing service at which our own Elizabeth Clement preached, filling the room with the power of her singing voice and the eloquence of her vision.

As noted, we gathered for witness as well. Associate Conference Minister, Kathy Clark, our former Associate Conference Minister, Joyce Hollyday, Tom Warren, the pastor of Pleasant Hill Community UCC, were a part of a witness For peace, "Fallen is Babylon" exploring the theme of the United States as empire. The gathering met for reflection and prayer at the beginning of Synod, and then at the end, met for a service of "sack cloth and ashes" at the gates of MacDill military base, from which the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have been conducted.

## UCC News

### UCC Newsroom

Headlines from the United Church of Christ

**UCC contingent among 5,000 rallying to 'Save Our Schools'**

Janice Resseger calls public schools "the primary civic institution in every community in this country." But she fears that Americans have "forgotten why justice in public education matters."





[Click for Walk for Justice Slideshow!](#) [Click for Walk for Justice Slideshow!](#)

There were also representatives present to thank the UCC for our support of the Immokalee workers, who labor in the fields which produce 90% of the tomatoes grown in the United States.

The United Church of Christ is joining in the transformation of communication through Facebook, Twitter, and dynamic web presence. Take a minute to check out the [General Synod and video highlights on the UCC website](#).

Peace,

**Tim Downs**, *Conference Minister*  
[Timothy C. Downs](#)[Timothy C. Downs](#)

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## General Synod Reflections from Synod Attendees

### ■ A Young Adult Delegate

I never truly understood what it means to be part of the United Church of Christ until I attended my first General Synod. General Synod changed everything I thought about what a church should be like and solidified a lot of my personal beliefs. Although sitting through plenary meetings was not the most exciting thing it helped me to learn a lot about the issues our denomination, as a whole, is experiencing and what we are doing to address them. I had heard about the UCC being open and affirming but I had never truly understood what it meant because I go to one of the more conservative churches in the UCC. It was refreshing to be able to interact with people of a multitude of sexual orientations without any of the stigmas I experience at home. I previously believed that one had to go to another kind of church to experience the amount of energy during worship that I experienced at Synod. However I now realize that there is UCC church for any and every one to go to and be accepted for who they are as an individual. I know that the UCC is a multitude of people with the same religious foundation but also a wide range of beliefs, opinions, and views. For me Synod represents how I would like the world to be, unified and in order to better not only yourself but everyone around you. I will never forget the people I met or the



experiences I had at General Synod 28 and I am truly grateful for the opportunity to represent the Southeast Conference of the UCC. General Synod 28 has ignited a passion for me to be more involved in our denomination, that I hopefully will be able cultivate in the near future. I will always be comforted knowing no matter where I am or who I am, or who I become the UCC will accept me for me and have a seat open for me at the table, which is more than I could ever ask for from anyone. Knowing that a large number of people like those in the UCC have restored my hope in what the world could and should be. Thank you UCC for what you are and what you do.

*Sincerely, Wesley Farrell-Williams, member of First Congregational Church, Atlanta, GA*

### ■ A First Time Delegate

***Wonderful. Uplifting. Spiritual. Renewing.***

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Janice Resseger calls public schools "the primary civic institution in every community in this country." But she fears that Americans have "forgotten why justice in public education matters."





Those are just some of the words I could use to describe what a General Synod of the UCC is like. All apply, yet don't capture everything.

More than anything, I think the people you meet and talk with and exchange ideas with is the strongest part of Synod. The crackling energy that comes out of these experiences spills over into everything else: worship, committee meetings, deliberations, meals, fun times and the deeper spiritual contemplation and growth that results.

Each and every time I have come home from a Synod I have been a different person, more deeply developed, a bit more in touch with our Lord and even more appreciative of what the United Church of Christ is doing in the wider world. This truly is a welcoming church, even with disagreements, financial concerns, unruliness in Synod deliberations at times and things that don't quite go right.



But the people! That just may be the true secret of what makes the UCC work, and Synod is just a compressed view of the wider UCC. When you have 900 delegates and over 3,000 people gathered in one place to do church work, whether it be business, worship or witnessing, it's like a Volkswagen being turned into a hot rod: never the same. You come home from it supercharged and fired up. And you are never the same.

I can think of some specific people who inspired me and opened me to new ideas while I was in Tampa, Fla. The night my wife Lois and I arrived, we encountered a UCC member from Hawaii, a Mr. Steve Ito. I had never met anyone from Hawaii, so it was completely a foreign experience. He related his own times with the UCC from a Pacific Islander perspective, and it certainly once again gave rise to a wider view. He was often seen around the convention center leading his wife, who is a social worker in Hawaii who happens to be blind. His care of and for her was visible and infinitely compassionate, and a shining example of Christianity.

My first meeting with a Muslim was a shock of a good nature. My assigned committee was looking at the resolution about hostility toward Islam and the Muslim community. This gentleman, Mr. Mohammed Sammak, witnessed to us about the Muslim world and was dignified, gracious and eloquent. Whenever I encountered him in the next few days, he remembered me, and would always stop to talk. When I asked for his permission to use his name so he would not get in trouble with his government back home in Lebanon, he smiled and swiftly gave that permission. My life is immeasurably enriched for making his acquaintance.

While sitting at a snack bar in the convention center, Lois and I encountered a young man from California named Peter (ironic, that!) who turned out to be a native of Puerto Rico. He had left his country when he saw firsthand the intolerance toward LGBT people. And he was sad about that country's conference leaving the UCC after the marriage equality measure that passed at General Synod 25 in Atlanta. We spent a pleasurable hour chatting with him and thoroughly enjoyed ourselves.

During one of the times I was involved in committee work, Lois met a UCC missionary who was home on leave from Hungary. They spent quite a while talking together at the waterside of the convention center, watching the rays swim by and then the dolphins. She learned from him, and he from her. And I did so too, although indirectly.

Those are just the people I didn't previously know.



And then there were the folks I worked with in committee hearings and folks from our own conference. The committee work almost went into "wordsmith meltdown" as one delegate described it, we were so intent on inserting inclusive language. But it was instructive and eventually became very satisfying and a bit fun.

And every time I am around them, I am continually astounded by the members of our own conference. Dedicated and upstanding, gracious and funny, and just plain hilarious at times – that's the Southeast Conference! And we all help each other. What more could you ask for?

I could probably fill a book with the experiences I bring home from each General Synod, this being my third straight but first as a delegate. Each time is different, but each time enables growth as a Christian and as a person. That to me is the real strength of our times together at Synod.

**Jennifer Spears**, member of Garden of Grace UCC in Columbia, S.C.

#### ■ An Experienced Attendee

From Leonard Pitts' challenges,

to Elizabeth Clements' final words, so inspiring;

With dancing youth, singing  
praise;

Five hundred marching for  
Justice

to nearby Publix Store,  
one cent more for farm  
workers;

Workshops on Justice,

as God's creation,  
how can we not care for  
others?

On Stewardship,

engaging in caring for the Earth,  
greening local churches.

Summing up by President Dr. Geoffrey Black

UCC Values: Continuing Testament;

Extravagant Welcome;  
Changing Lives;

Audacious inclusion,

advocacy, concern for the least powerful;

Strong support for LGBT persons,

Large number of Peace and Justice churches.

General Synod connects us,

to leaders, other churches, old friends.

I came home grateful





to be part of the United Church of Christ.  
*Mary Ellen Myers, member Central Congregational UCC Atlanta*

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## Directors Discuss the Future of Regional Theological Education

Prior to General Synod 28

"The future of the church depends on theological education," is a statement made recently by Daniel Aleshire, the head of the Association of Theological Schools. Aleshire continues, "The future is now ... and it is promising!" On the Friday before General Synod in Tampa, Florida, the deans and directors of regional theological education programs met to discuss the future and how we are living into it creatively and collaboratively. Kathy Clark, Associate Conference Minister for Ministry Formation and Leadership Development, director of the Theology Among the People (TAP) program and developer of its newest incarnation, PATHWAYS, participated representing the Southeast Conference.

In the SEC, our future is linked to a past that spans not only time, but also continents. The TAP program, now in its 12th year, was developed by the Rev. Dr. Richard Sales based on his work in Theological Education by Extension (TEE) that began over 30 years ago in southern Africa. The legacy of his work continues not only in the SEC where we are committed to leadership development that transforms churches and transforms lives, but also lives on in several vital programs in Africa, including Theological Education by Extension College located in Johannesburg, South Africa. When Kathy was in Africa in the fall of 2010, she had the opportunity to visit the TEE College and learn of their extensive work. As it happened, the director of that program, Ms. Megan Baxter, attended General Synod as a guest of Global Ministries. In a happy reunion, Kathy met up again with Ms. Baxter when she participated in the meeting of



theological educators, at Kathy's suggestion, to share about her work. Ms. Baxter inspired the group with stories of the impact that TEE has throughout southern Africa, where thousands of lay and authorized ministers are trained annually to lead a vital and revitalizing church. (For



## UCC News

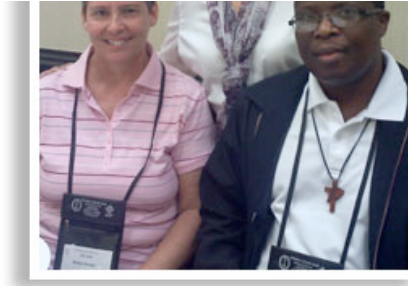
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more information about [TEE College South Africa.](#))

While in Tampa, the group discussed best practices in assessing programs and learning outcomes. This is an important issue particularly as it relates to programs that not only provide lay enrichment but also equip individuals for licensed and

ordained ministry in the UCC. Barbara Blodgett of Local Church Ministry's Parish Life and Leadership Ministry Team led the lively discussion. The group intends to follow up by developing guidelines for program assessment and a peer review process. Providing excellence in leadership development is a responsibility that belongs to the whole church and this group hopes to add to the conversation among educators, Committees on Ministry, and local churches. The group will meet again in 2012 to continue to discuss ways to share resources and collaborate across conferences as together we seek to form leaders for the future of God's church.

[Link Here](#) for some *Continuing Education Opportunities* - Grants for Pastors from the Louisville Institute

In photo above left, Kathy Clark (standing) reunites with Megan Baxter, Director of the Theological Education by Extension College of South Africa, and Prince Dibeela, head of the United Church of Southern Africa, at the UCC General Synod in Tampa, FL. Baxter and Dibeela are partners in Global Missions. Kathy met them on a Global Ministries sponsored trip to Africa in 2010.

In photo above right, Ms. Megan Baxter, Director of Theological Education by Extension College in South Africa, addresses a gathering of UCC educators prior to General Synod in Tampa.

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**United Church of Christ Women's  
SOUTHERN REGIONAL MEETING  
BLOWING ROCK, NORTH CAROLINA  
October 7-9, 2011**

***A Faith Inspired Look Toward Wholeness***

**Theme Scripture: Proverbs 3:7-8 NIV**

"Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and shun evil. This will bring health to your body and nourishment to our bones."

**Keynote Speaker: Ms. Barbara T. Baylor, MPH**

**Minister for Health Care Justice**

Cleveland Conference Office

**Bible Study Leader: Rev. Dian Jackson**

Rockingham, NC

**Entertainment: Glen Bolick - Mountain Story Teller and singer**



Minister for Health Care Justice

United Church of Christ, Justice and  
Witness Ministries

**Sample of Workshops:**

(Choice of Saturday AM or PM)

"Five Wishes" - Rev. Amanda Hendler Voss	//	"Self-Care Strategies" - Rev. Willie Mae Hawkins
"Healthy Cooking" - Jeanne Leonard	//	"Spiritual Wholeness" - Rev. Vertie Powers
"Mental Health" - Rev. Jo Sherer	//	"You Are What You Eat" - Ms. Roberta Perry
"Relationships" - Rev. Dorothy Gager	//	"Youth Suicide - GLBT" - Ms. Gwen Thomas

**Other Ongoing Happenings:**

Silent Auction/ Hospitality Area / Labyrinth / Massage Therapist / Beauty Consultant

REGISTRATIONS: Coordinated Through Individual Conferences' Registrars:

(Regional Registrar: Ruth Parks, 144 Woodlawn St., Lexington, NC 27292)

COST: \$135-\$175 depending on accommodations selected (first in, first choice)

Come and join us. Meet friends from past regional meetings. Relax in the beautiful surroundings of the North Carolina mountains. Renew Spirit, Vitality and Power



## REGIONAL MEETING OF UCC WOMEN

OCTOBER 7-9, 2011 Blowing Rock

Conference Center

### Lodging

1. All rooms will be provided with sheets, blankets, pillows, and washcloths.  
Note: None of the lodging has a television, telephone, or hair dryer.
2. Except for cottages, only bottom bunks will be used.
3. Lodging will be assigned as completed registration forms and payment are received.

### Deadline

1. The deadline for Registration is September 14, 2011. We cannot accept any registrations after this date.
2. Cancellation policy: If you cancel by September 14, you will receive a refund for everything except the \$30 registration fee.
3. After registering, you will receive a confirmation packet. This will include, a map, directions to conference center, and information on schedule, workshops, service projects, recreational opportunities, etc.

Silent Auction: One way we offset expenses for the regional meeting is through a silent auction. Please remember to bring items for this.

FLORIDA Susan Diamicis, 6068 Azalea Circle, West Palm Beach, FL 33415  
Tel. (561) 615-0471

SOUTHEAST Ms. Nancy Sales, 705 47<sup>th</sup> Way S., Birmingham, AL 35222  
Tel. (205) 591-8908

SOUTHERN Ruth Parks, 144 Woodlawn St. Lexington, NC 27292  
Tel.(336) 357-2912 cell (336) 242-4486

SOUTH CENTRAL Ms. Maureen Coe, 110 Kaylee Dr., Hahnville, LA 70057 Tel. (985) 783-9429



SOUTHERN REGIONAL MEETING OF UCC WOMEN OCTOBER 7-9,2011

Blowing Rock Conference Center

Registration Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Conference \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing \_\_\_\_\_ City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Cell-Phone (    ) \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone (    ) \_\_\_\_\_

Email if available \_\_\_\_\_

In order to assist in making lodging assignments please list all persons who wish to share a room or cottage:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_ 5. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_ 6. \_\_\_\_\_

Packages Include registration fee, all meals, and lodging. Please circle the package you prefer.

Package A    Corriher Lodge    each room has two double beds and a bath-can accommodate up to 4 people.

2 persons per room	\$168.00 per person
3 persons per room	\$ 152.00 per person
4 persons per room	\$144.00 per person

Package B    3 locations- Rustic dorm-style rooms with shared bathrooms.  
Cost per person                      \$134.00

Circle your preference of location: A. Rowe    B. Calvin    C. Youth Center

Package C    4 Cottages (must register together as a group of 5 or 6 persons; each cottage has one queen-size bed, two twin beds, and one bunk bed.

" Cost of cottage for 6 persons	\$804.00
(or \$134.00 per person)	
Cost of cottage for 5 persons	\$740.00
(or \$148.00 per person)	



Package D Day Participant Only

Cost-\$30.00 for registration fee plus cost for whichever meals you plan to eat on site.

Please circle meals you plan to eat:

Fri. Dinner \$11.00

Sat. Breakfast \$8.50

Sat. Lunch \$9.50

Sat. Dinner \$11.00

Sun. Breakfast \$8.50

Sun. Box Lunch \$9.50

Total amount for Package D Registration Fee

\$30.00

Total Meals

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total

\$

Payment

Make check payable to Southern Regional UCC Women

Total Cost of Package \$ \_

Total Amount Enclosed \$

General Information

1. Any dietary restrictions (be specific):

2. Handicap Needs (be specific):

3. Wheelchair access needed

4. Will you need transportation from the Greensboro Airport?

If you travel by plane, please make arrangements to arrive as close to 2:00 p.m. as possible on Friday at the Piedmont Triad International Airport (PTI) in Greensboro, NC. Women from the Southern Conference will coordinate picking up participants and bringing them to Blowing Rock, which is approximately two hours away. The vans will leave for Blowing Rock after 2:00.

5. Because of confidentiality, may we publish your name, phone number, address, e-mail and any photograph taken for a specific purpose such as publicity?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

6. Copy this form before mailing to your specific Conference Registrant.





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## Sackcloth and Ashes

**General Synod Participants Hold a Peace Vigil at Tampa's MacDill Air Force Base**  
By Rev. Joyce Hollyday

The early-evening Tampa sky shimmered with shades of aqua and gray, as a breeze stirred and dark-blue thunderclouds gathered on the horizon. Pointing over my head, a man standing directly opposite me in our circle outside the front gate of MacDill Air Force Base shouted, "Look!" Doubting that any sight could be more stunning than the luminous expanse before me, I turned and was startled to discover a large rainbow, vibrant with color, arcing over the base.

MacDill serves as Central Command for the U.S. wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other parts of the Middle East. It also hosts the United States Special Operations Command, which plots and oversees such military ventures as the assassination of Osama bin Laden. On the eve of Independence Day, forty General Synod attendees boarded a

bus outside the Tampa Convention Center and rode to the base, where a few locals joined us for a worship service and peace vigil.

Several of us had spent the day before Synod opened in a workshop titled "Fallen Is Babylon: American Empire and the Commonwealth of God." The event, co-sponsored by the Southeast Conference's



Theology Among the People (TAP) Program and UCC Justice and Witness Ministries (JWM), was hosted by Rev. Bernice Powell Jackson and First United Church of Tampa. Rev. Tom Warren, pastor of Pleasant Hill Community UCC in Tennessee, began the day with an in-depth analysis of the military, economic, and social expressions of empire. Rev. Joyce Hollyday, co-pastor of Circle of Mercy UCC in Asheville, North Carolina, guided participants throughout the day through Revelation's disturbing images of the seductions of empire and held up the book's powerful call to "come out of Babylon." Edith Rasell and Sandra Sorenson of JWM offered insights on creative and faithful responses to empire, while Rev. Kathy Clark, Associate Conference Minister of the Southeast Conference and director of the TAP Program, grounded the day in prayer and worship.

Our appearance at MacDill Air Force Base was an extension of that worship, offered in a spirit of resistance and the hope of transformation. We listened to the story of the prophet Jonah's journey to Nineveh, where the king donned sackcloth and sat in ashes



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as a sign that all his realm should “turn from their evil ways and from the violence that is in their hands” (Jonah 3:8). A similar hope had brought us to MacDill’s front door. Hearing that God was so moved by the king’s gesture of confession and repentance that God underwent a change of mind and heart and saved the city from calamity, we petitioned for an equal dose of mercy there under the rainbow’s glow.

[Click for Babylon Slideshow!](#) [Click for Babylon](#)

[Slideshow!](#)

As Rev. Warren began placing pieces of sackcloth over the shoulders of the participants, a gentle rain began to fall. He asked if we should cut our worship short, but a unanimous acclamation for continuing rose from the circle. By the time Revs. Clark and Hollyday began imposing ashes on foreheads with the blessing “Know the mercy and peace of God,” the rain was a pelting downpour. Still, the participants refused to be deterred from their witness, staying until the last strains of the closing song: “I’m gonna lay down my sword and shield, down by the riverside...” A benediction appropriate to the occasion was offered: “Let justice flow down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream” (Amos 5:24). Clothes and signs were dampened—soaked, actually—but spirits definitely were not, as we climbed back on the bus to return to Synod.

Keeping vigil outside MacDill, I was reminded of a dream I had during the first Gulf War, in which nuclear missiles arced into the sky from all directions. Immediately after they were launched, the jet trails they left behind turned into rainbows. The dream’s imagery felt to me like a natural “swords into plowshares” promise of peace. I remembered consulting the story of Noah after waking up from the dream, searching out God’s placement of the rainbow in the sky as a sign of the promise never again to destroy the earth through a flood. “When the bow is in the clouds,” announced God to Noah, “I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature” (Genesis 9:16). God voices that sentiment four times in ten verses, as if God needed to convince Godself. The rainbow, I realized then, was intended as a reminder not for us, but for God.

The rainbow is mocked, and God’s patience is tested, whenever destruction rains from the skies, and with each new war that is launched. We went to MacDill Air Force Base to confess our complicity in the suffering and plead for an end to it. And to give thanks for God’s continuing mercy.



[Link here to view and read](#) continued coverage by Tampa’s WMNF about the “Fallen Is Babylon” event.



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## Welcome to PATHWAYS

*Transformative Theological Education  
for a Changing World*

*"The future of the church depends  
on theological education..."*

*The future is now, and it is full of promise!"*

—Daniel Aleshire

The vision of **PATHWAYS** is to create, promote, and deliver transformative theological education in the Southeast Conference UCC, the United Church of Christ, and North America and beyond, in order to meet the changing leadership needs of today's church.



In response to the challenges and opportunities of the changing religious landscape and the state of theological education in North America, the mission of **PATHWAYS** is to bring together the best of traditional theological education and the contemporary experiences of the church towards formation of new ministry models by offering affordable, accessible and excellent theological education to lay and authorized leaders. [Link here to read program flyer.](#)

**PATHWAYS** is the next incarnation of the **Theology Among the People (TAP)** program which has been equipping lay and licensed ministers successfully in the Southeast Conference for over 12 years. We have taken the best of **TAP** and integrated and built upon it to create a new program that is responsive to the changing needs of the church for well-formed pastoral leaders.

## Who Should Consider PATHWAYS

- PATHWAYS theological education is for lay leaders, authorized ministers, and for those who are seeking authorization for ministry.
- PATHWAYS is represented by two significant entities working together in a collaborative and creative approach: the **Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ (SECUCC)** and **Lancaster Theological Seminary (LTS)**.
- PATHWAYS courses will be facilitated by experienced and trained practitioners and seminary faculty.

*Graduate  
Testimonials*



## WHAT IS PATHWAYS

PATHWAYS offers THREE levels of learning:

- Level 1 – Two years in length; designed for lay leaders to develop theological and ministry competency with focus on biblical and practical theological reflection and praxis.
- Level 2 – Three years in length; designed for lay and authorized ministers to advance and enrich theological understanding and inform ministry methodology in a fast changing world.
- Level 3 – Four years in length; designed for authorized ministers with ministry experience and for those seeking to be newly authorized for ministry.

## The Flexibility of PATHWAYS

- PATHWAYS will be offered regionally and nationally, and eventually, globally.
- Each level of the program entails face-to-face regional meetings and on-line classrooms that are accessible from the participant's own home or office.

## PATHWAYS Training

- PATHWAYS theological education is hybrid in delivery; it uses both face-to-face and on-line technologies that are both synchronous and asynchronous.
- PATHWAYS learners will begin the program with a face-to-face retreat and will convene face-to-face at least once each year.
- PATHWAYS learners will join in periodic synchronous ("real time") meetings via webinars or similar platforms.
- Most of the courses will be asynchronous using a platform such as Moodle or MySakai.
- PATHWAYS uses the cohort model promoting the development of intentional communities of collaborative and peer learning.

## PATHWAYS Rolls Out this Fall

- PATHWAYS will launch its first Facilitator Training Course in August, 2011.
- PATHWAYS will launch its first learning group, Cohort One beginning with Course One in a face-to-face retreat in October, 2011.
- NOW ACCEPTING INQUIRIES!

For more information contact [Kathy Clark](#) directly, PATHWAYS Executive Director.

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## News From Our Local Churches - July



### Meagan McGlover Inspires GS28 Workshop to Health and Wellness

Megan is a member of First Congregational Church in Atlanta, GA.



### "Let's Talk About Weight Loss!"

Megan (pronounced MEE-gan) McGlover grabbed the microphone in Ballroom A and launched into her Suncoast Saturday workshop with enough energy and enthusiasm to wear out her audience before the event got started.

[Read more](#) by following link.

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### UCC Newsroom

Headlines from the United Church of Christ

### UCC contingent among 5,000 rallying to 'Save Our Schools'

Janice Resseger calls public schools "the primary civic institution in every community in this country." But she fears that Americans have "forgotten why justice in public education matters."

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### General Synod 28 Closing Worship: Transform What's Possible

The Rev. Elizabeth Mitchell Clement invoked the hope of enslaved Africans rehearsed in spirituals and the trans-formative power of speech with Jesus in her

sermon, delivered at the closing worship of General Synod 28 in Tampa - July 5, 2011.

Though the power of a song or a conversation to change lives strains the imagination of a high-tech world, she said, these held and embodied refreshment and trans-formation.

[Read more](#) by following link.







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Lifting Up . . . July



**Jean Miller**, member in discernment at Kirkwood UCC in Atlanta, GA sustained serious injuries to her arm when she fell from the stage at General Synod. Jean underwent surgery while in Florida and has since returned home to Georgia. Jean reports that she is healing well. Jean wants to thank all who have prayed for her recovery and ask that we continue to do so.

**Virginia “Ginny” Nixon**, Conference Moderator, who was unable to travel to General Synod due to health issues. Ginny’s wisdom and guidance was very much missed at Synod, but she was lifted up by all who attended.

**Tim Downs**, Conference Minister and **Carol Kobayashi**, his wife, as they travel for 2 weeks of vacation throughout Pennsylvania and Tim as he prepares for partial knee replacement surgery on August 1, 2011. Although this surgery is routine, as with any surgery complications can occur. Tim anticipates several months of physical therapy after the surgery. We request prayers for both Carol and Tim.

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### Feature Focus - July 2011

# GENERAL SYNOD 28 | A Re

by Rev. Tim Downs

A varied mix of people gathered once again this year for General Synod. Hosted in Tampa, Florida this bi-annual event gathered a large mix of persons ready to conduct business, worship, offer a witness to the world, and have a Family Reunion.

Before the end of June, many of our SEC conference members were on their way to Florida for pre-conference meetings. By the beginning of July, the additional team of 7 delegates from the Southeast Conference and over 50 visitors joined them in the week's jammed packed festivities.



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Reflections from Attendees: [Link here to read their stories](#)

- **A Young Adult Delegate** | Wesley Farrell-Williams - GS28 solidified a lot of my personal beliefs.
- **A First Time Delegate** | Jennifer Spears - Wonderful. Uplifting. Spiritual. Renewing.
- **An Experienced Attendee** | Mary Ellen Myers - Grateful to be a part of the UCC.

Events Surrounding the General Synod:

- **Fallen Is Babylon** at MacDill Air Force Base
- **Theological Educator Meeting**
- **PATHWAYS Launch at Synod**
- **Walk for Justice**

If you were not able to join us in Tampa catch the highlights on the UCC website.

We encourage you to check the variety of news issues that made up GS28 at [www.ucc.org](http://www.ucc.org). A Synod [Wrap-up Video](#) is available also.





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Conference News - July

Breakfast at General Synod

The SEC delegates and staff issued an invitation to conference visitors at General Synod to join them for a breakfast caucus from Sunday, July 3<sup>rd</sup> through Tuesday, July 5<sup>th</sup>.

During these breakfast meetings there were discussions among delegates, pastors and church members concerning resolutions and governance of the United Church of Christ. It was wonderful fellowship with friends reconnecting or new friendships being formed.



Over 50 Delegates, Visitors and/or Exhibitors from Various Congregations in SEC Attended Synod

Pastors and/or members from the following churches were present:

- First Congregational Church, Birmingham, AL;
- Open Table: A Community of Faith, Mobile, AL;
- Community Congregational Church, Montgomery, AL;
- Central Congregational Church, Atlanta, GA;
- First Congregational Church, Atlanta, GA;
- Kirkwood UCC, Atlanta, GA;

- Rush Memorial Congregational Church, Atlanta, GA;
- Praxis UCC, Atlanta, GA;
- Decatur UCC; Decatur, GA;
- Pilgrimage UCC, Marietta, GA;
- Bethany Congregational Church, Thomasville, GA;
- Circular Congregational Church, Charleston, SC;
- Garden of Grace UCC, Columbia, SC;
- Church of the Savior UCC, Knoxville, TN;
- Holy Trinity Community Church, Nashville, TN;
- Howard Congregational Church, Nashville, TN; and
- Pleasant Hill Community Church, Pleasant Hill, TN



Synod delegates for the Southeast Conference were:  
Jennifer Austin | Holy Trinity Community Church, Nashville, TN;



**Jim Crabb** | Central Congregational Church, Atlanta, GA;  
**Wesley Farrell-Williams** (Young Adult) | First Congregational Church, Atlanta, GA;  
**Jeremy Rich** | Bethany Congregational Church, Thomasville, GA;  
**Christophe Ringer** | Howard Congregational Church, Nashville, TN;  
**Jennifer Spears** | Garden of Grace UCC, Columbia, SC; and  
**Bette Graves Thomas** | First Congregational Church, Atlanta, GA.

Conference Minister, **Tim Downs** served as an associate delegate from the Board of Local Church Ministries.

**Thank You to all those who took part in Synod!**

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**Outgoing Collegium Members released;  
 New Moderators Installed**

Representing the Georgia-South Carolina Association for **Stephen Sterner** was Conference Minister, **Timothy Downs**.

Using liturgy found in the Book of Worship of the United Church of Christ, delegates and visitors to General Synod 28 were able to offer thanks, praise, and prayer one more time to outgoing Collegium members, and to witness to the installation of the moderators for the 2011-2013 biennium. [Read more on the UCC website.](#)



Steve Sterner & Tim Downs on the Big Screen at GS28 - *right*.



**OCWM Sunday - Come and Celebrate**

The Southeast Conference has called for churches to celebrate OCWM Sunday on September 18th, to help us all understand that OCWM is about "US."



**United Church of Christ**

**Women's Southern Regional Meeting - Make Plans to Join Us!**

The Southern Regional Women's Meeting takes place **October 7 – 9** in beautiful **Blowing Rock, North Carolina**.

**Now is the time to take action. Register early!**

*The deadline is Wednesday, September 14.*

**Financial help is available from the Southeast Conference Women's Mite Fund.**

The theme is **"A Faith Inspired Look Toward Wholeness"** planned by women from Southern, Southeast, Florida and South Central conferences of the UCC. Ms. Barbara Baylor of the U.C.C. national staff will give the keynote speaker.

Among the workshop leaders are Rev. Dorothy Gager, Rev. Gwen Thomas, Ms. Jo Sherer, and Ms. Joan Gittings from the Southeast Conference with great topics to share.

Make your plans with your fellow members and friends, UCC.

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**Back to School This August!**

**CPR - [The Place Where Church Leaders Go to Learn.](#)**

- > **August 04** | Good News Preaching / Webinar
- > **August 10** | Managing Conflict and Change = Healthy Church / Webinar
- > **August 11** | The Socially Networked Ministry / 5-wk Course
- > **August 16** | Part-Time Ministry Call: Disappointment or Opportunity? / Webinar
- > **August 18** | Managing Change & Conflict = Healthy Churches / 5-wk Course



> **August 20** | History & Polity in the UCC

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## Celebrations July 2011

### Energy and Optimism Permeate New Church Celebration

Buoyed by encouraging numbers and boldly optimistic that the trend will continue, the Rev. David Schoen led a rousing celebration of new church plants Friday afternoon in the Plenary Hall of the Tampa Convention Center. [Read more about the celebration.](#)



On stage from the Southeast Conference were new church start pastors and pastors of new UCC congregations: **Ellen Sims (Open Table: A Community of Faith, Mobile, AL)**; **Chris Lyman Waldron (Praxis United Church of Christ in Atlanta, GA)**; **Susannah Davis (Kirkwood United Church of Christ, Atlanta, GA)** and; **Glenna Shepherd (Decatur United Church of Christ, Decatur, GA)** along with members of their congregations. Other new churches in the Southeast Conference are Jubilee! Circle United Church of Christ, Columbia, SC and Safe Harbor United Church of Christ, Flowood, MS.

**You & Your Guests are Cordially Invited to the Upcoming TAP Graduation**



On Saturday, August 27, 2011 we will have a Banquet & Commencement Honoring 2011 TAP Graduates, Participants, Facilitators and their Friends

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# You are Cordially Invited

**Banquet & Commencement will be held at**  
**First Congregational Church, UCC**  
 125 Ellis Street, NE. | Atlanta, Georgia

Banquet starts at 12 o'clock

**Greg Carey**, Professor of New Testament at Lancaster Theological Seminary, will be our guest preacher.

**Reservations are Required** - [Link here for form \(pdf\)](#)  
**deadline August 12**

Cost: \$20.00 per person

*Child Care Available Upon Request*

*Contact Kathy* [Contact Kathy](#) for more information.

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